

In the claims:

Please amend claims 1, 13, 15, 19, and 22 as follows:

1. (Thrice Amended) A contact structure for an integrated circuit comprising:
- a lower bulk insulator layer situated above a semiconductor substrate, the lower bulk insulator having upper and lower surfaces;
 - a conductor layer situated above the lower bulk insulator layer;
 - a sleeve insulator layer in contact with the conductor layer, the sleeve insulator layer comprising:
 - a first terminus; and
 - a second terminus opposite the first terminus, the second terminus located between the upper and lower surfaces of the lower bulk insulator; and
 - a conductive contact extending from and beyond the sleeve insulator layer to terminate at a contact on said semiconductor substrate, said conductive contact being electrically insulated from the conductor layer by the sleeve insulator layer.
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13. (Thrice Amended) A contact structure for an integrated circuit comprising:
- a lower bulk insulator layer situated above a semiconductor substrate, the lower bulk insulator having upper and lower surfaces;
 - a conductor layer situated above the lower bulk insulator layer;
 - an upper bulk insulator layer upon the conductor layer;
 - a sleeve insulator layer in contact with the conductor layer, the sleeve insulator layer comprising:
 - a first terminus; and
 - a second terminus opposite the first terminus, the second terminus located between the upper and lower surfaces of the lower bulk insulator; and
 - a conductive plug extending from and beyond the sleeve insulator layer to terminate at a contact on said semiconductor substrate, said conductive plug being electrically insulated from the conductor layer by the sleeve insulator layer.

15. (Thrice Amended) A contact structure for an integrated circuit comprising:

a lower bulk insulator layer situated above a semiconductor substrate, the lower bulk insulator layer having upper and lower surfaces and a sidewall;

a dielectric layer situated above the lower bulk insulator layer;

a conductor layer situated above the lower bulk insulator layer and above the dielectric layer, the conductor layer having a sidewall;

an electrically insulating layer situated upon the conductor layer;

a sleeve insulator layer in contact with the lower bulk insulator layer sidewall and the conductor layer sidewall, the sleeve insulator layer comprising:

a first terminus; and

a second terminus opposite the first terminus, the second terminus located between the upper and lower surfaces of the lower bulk insulator; and

a conductive plug extending from and beyond the sleeve insulator layer to terminate at a contact on said semiconductor substrate, said conductive plug being electrically insulated from the conductor layer by the sleeve insulator layer.

19. (Thrice Amended) A contact structure for an integrated circuit comprising:

a semiconductor substrate having an active region therein;

a capacitor storage node in contact with the active region;

a capacitor dielectric upon the capacitor storage node;

a capacitor cell plate upon the capacitor dielectric;

an electrically conductive plug in contact with the active region and the storage node;

and

a sleeve insulator layer insulating the capacitor cell plate from the electrically conductive plug, the sleeve insulator layer in contact with the capacitor storage node, the capacitor dielectric, and the capacitor cell plate, the sleeve insulator layer comprising:

a first terminus; and

a second terminus opposite the first terminus, the second terminus separated from the semiconductor substrate and in contact with the capacitor storage node.

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22. (Thrice Amended) A contact structure for an integrated circuit comprising:

- a lower bulk insulator layer situated above a semiconductor substrate;
- a dielectric layer above the lower bulk insulator layer;
- a conductor layer situated above the dielectric layer;
- an electrically insulating layer formed conformably upon the conductor layer;
- a sleeve insulator layer comprising a material selected from the group consisting of Ta_2O_5 and Si_3N_4 , the sleeve insulator layer comprising:

- a first terminus adjacent to and in contact with the electrically insulating layer; and

- a second terminus opposite the first terminus, the second terminus above the semiconductor substrate and within the lower bulk insulator layer; and

- a conductive contact terminating at a refractory metal silicide material contact on said semiconductor substrate and being electrically insulated from the conductor layer by the sleeve insulator layer.